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1968/02/17

MEMORANDUM

INFORMATION

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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Saturday, February 17, 1968 -- 8:40 a.m.

Mr. President:

Herewith two Saigon responses to Loan's judgment that a coordinated attack on Saigon and elsewhere should be expected for February 18:

-- Bunker says that Westy regards it as probable that there will be further attacks between February 18 and 23, with the principal targets being Saigon, Hue, Quang Tri, and Can Tho.

-- The CIA reports that there are no "firm indications" of an imminent attack on Saigon.

In any case, you will note Westy's judgment that "both U.S and ARVN forces are fully alert and prepared to deal with any emergency."

Thieu's assessment is as follows, in a talk with Bunker on February 15:

"I asked Thieu how he assessed the Tet offensive from the perspective of about two weeks. Thieu remarked that he was increasingly impressed with the indication it gave of the price the enemy was willing to pay for its political and psychological objectives. He thought it would take the enemy quite some time to recover from the high losses they had suffered both in men and weapons. He anticipated that they will continue to try to apply pressure wherever possible, seeking to pin down our troops to the maximum extent while continuing their build up for possible future offensives. He expected they would make use of mortar attacks, harassments, attacks on air fields, and a general build up of tension among our troops. Their hope would be to prevent us from using our forces elsewhere and he thought this might go on for some time, maybe 3 to 4 months. Anticipating a major offensive in the north, during the dry season there, perhaps beginning in April or May, he predicted that its timing and duration would be designed to have the maximum effect during our summer political conventions."

DECLASSIFIED

Authority OSD 11-15-78 letter
By ig, NARS, Date 3-20-79

Walt Rostow

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